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Nation

Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward - Part 2

October Women's History Month

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editorial

Just us

by Will Nicholls

By the Creator, it is true. The truth in that old chestnut of a joke we all told way back when. Justice for Indians? Look at the jails it's just us.

A federal ombudsman in the form of correctional investigator Howard Sapers reported last week that the Canadian justice system engaged in systemic discimination against Aboriginal people. Hmm, you don't say...

One statistic in his report, however, stands out. Of the general Canadian population, 117 out of 100,000 people are now incarcerated. But 1,024 of every 100,000 Native people are now behind bars in this country, for an incarceration rate that is 10 times higher.

Given that Women's History Month's theme is: Aboriginal Women; the Journey Forward, looking at prison population figures for Aboriginal women makes one wonder just where that journey forward will lead. Aboriginal women make up 32 per cent of all females in federal custody today. What will the next decade mean for them? Overall Aboriginals represent 18.5 per cent of the prison population while forming only 2.7 per cent of Canada's population.

As if we didn't already know there was a problem in the system. The Just'us joke is as old as the real problem is old and tired.

Yes, it was just us but this is just for us the flavour of the hour.

Just as mold in over-crowded houses was a problem and a national tragedy not so long ago. A few million dollars were tossed out while the problem was studied. Is the study over and is there a solution?

Wasn't the high rate of suicide among First Nation youth a hard-hitting story nationally? Wasn't there concern? Wasn't there a study to see what to do next? Was it ignored? Who knows these answers?

Water, safe drinking water on Native reserves, became an issue. Every single community that benefited from upgrades was showcased. Just how many are those and how many are still waiting? Perhaps a study should be made?

Diabetes, with rates approaching 20 percent, would make any other population cry pandemic. A few programs are cobbled together but rates remain unchanged.

Another hard-hitting story runs its course and the problem is safely and largely forgotten until the next time.

Just for the record, Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day denied any discrimination exists in Canada's prisons. I'm still waiting for him to change his name to Doris as the petition was something he believed in too. He still hasn't changed his name or undoubtedly his mind.

This is just a fragment of the mindset of the unlamented Canadian Alliance, who believed Canada's Aboriginal populations lived in the equivalent of a South Sea island paradise. Hell, the only discrimination they seemed to see was that the First Nations had a few rights they didn't expect. And if they couldn't have them then nobody should. The right to land, the right to expect the rule of law to be just and so on.

I have thought of a just course and think we should adopt Stockwell Day. Let's give him what we have. The South Seas would look so different if you were an islander instead of a tourist with a wet suit photo op.

A challenge to you, Minister Day, is to walk a mile in our footsteps. After all, you have asked us to walk in yours. One on one or in groups isn't living a First Nations life.

Let's make this story different from the rest or at least give prisons reserve status if you plan to send so many of us there.

It probably won't be as the National Chief said, "First Nations poverty is the single largest social justice issue in Canada today." Given that this is the International Week to Eradicate Poverty, the prison story will hit the back burner as usual. The tears will be targeted as pictures of Aboriginal poverty designed to tug at heartstrings will hit mainstream media.

But what will come of it? A few tears and then a few years... behind bars. Such is the Canadian way.

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on the cover

Photo: Mixed Bag

Design: Alexandre Costa

rez notes

XX vs. XXX

To my knowledge, I was born from a woman. *She* was born from a woman, who was born from a woman, who was born from a woman, who was....

That gets me wondering how those facts affect the argument between the supporters of creationism and evolution: was man created first, or did he have to be born from a woman? What came first? The chicken or the egg, if you will.

Does that mean that the idea of man being created first and, fashioned from Adam's rib, the chick coming in second, is universally wrong? Or is it just a matter of XX chromosomes versus the XY, mixed up in some chemical soup we call casual sex?

This issue touches on dangerous grounds for a guy like me, a man, who must make comments about the fairer sex in such a way so as to not spark riots against all men dead or alive. I am still on domestic probation for having danced with Jane Fonda at a Banff film festival many moons ago. I hope I will not become the target of the next hairrorist attack by angry throngs of wild women.

I can't remember the title or author but I once came across a book I thought was akin to *Mad Magazine*'s Spy vs. Spy by actually getting the top secret information as to why the white spy was white and the black spy black. Eureka! Suddenly, I felt I was actually on the same level as women in terms of their thinking...

And then I slowly realized that the whole book was not an insider's user-friendly guide to women, but was actually part of a disinformation campaign to lull men into a false state of self-satisfaction. We could be smug in our "knowledge" of the inner working of a woman's mind. We would quietly capitalize on that knowledge until they caught on!

I was too obvious in my sudden revelation, however. The guilty pleasure of "knowing" how they work was written across my macho face, and I was busted reading the forbidden book of knowledge and deep secrets. It was confiscated before I got past the first chapter. To this day, sadly, I have an easier time understanding Einstein's theory of relativity. E=mc2.

Much to many men's chagrin (or its plural chagra), another book called Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus was published dissin' men like no tomorrow. It didn't really have much to do with the speed of light, planetary alignment or the Pythagorean theorem or anything as easily grasped as all that. So the imbalance of nature was restored.

Women created new practices that we men would need decades to decipher. Damn, we have to create a new supercomputer just to figure out what our next move would be. But hey, if I say too much, I might just spill the beans to the hapless public and cause further furor over the sexual divide, thus creating a greater cosmic chasm that even an intelligent designer would have trouble repairing.

Even though women have the power to eliminate male communications ability to a common denominator of "duhhh," men also adapted a survival mechanism in the face of such fatal ridicule: it's called sports.

Sports is the therapy that all men must partake in, if only because all that pent up energy has to be expressed in some way. There's also the advantage that, come what may, at least a few days each month every woman finds a sudden appreciation for strapping jocks and the scent of male pheromones. Signing off from Mars, I remain forever male.

Ed Note: All opinions and anything to do with Sonny Orr are not necessarily those of the Nation, it's staff, editors, publishers, owners, writers or janitors.

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Canada

AN INSIDE JOB?

Investigation reveals theft of almost $300K from Waskaganish band

by Steve Bonspiel

An accounting firm's forensic examination of the Waskaganish band council's finances has uncovered a theft of almost $300,000. The investigation found the money was taken either by "persons unknown or by Ms. [Shirley] Cheezo herself" from rental payments intended for the Waskaganish housing department that Cheezo once ran.

Cheezo, the former housing department administrator, was suspended with pay in May 2005 pending further investigation of the missing money. Her employment has since been terminated.

The Nation obtained a copy of the forensic report conducted by the accounting firm of Forsyth, Finucci, LLP, CGAs in St. Catharines, Ontario.

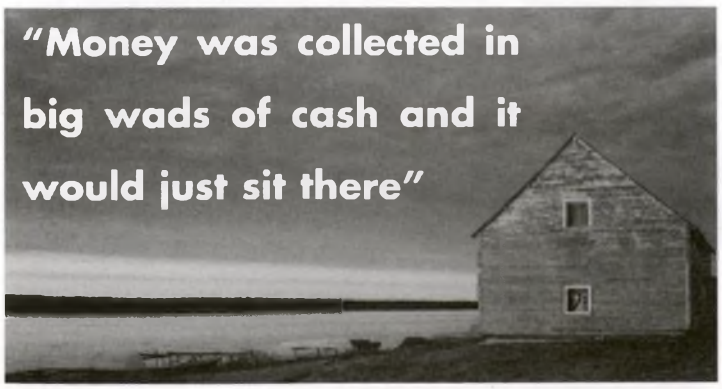
The firm investigated the books covering the period from April 1, 2000, until May 31, 2005, and found huge discrepancies between the monies received and the amounts deposited in the housing department's three bank accounts.

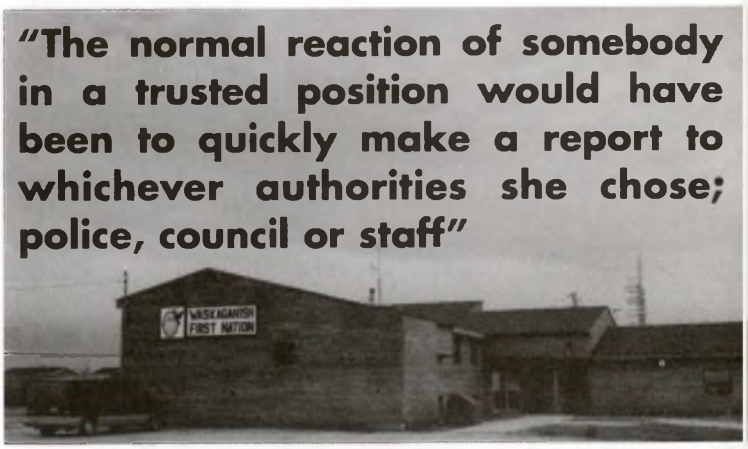
The investigation of the main bank account at the Bank of Montreal showed that deposits were made sporadically. During many months, nothing was deposited into the bank accounts. Some months had partial deposits, as in December 2000 when $3,691 was received from various payments but only $2,712.50 was in fact deposited. The missing $978.50 remains unaccounted for.

The discrepancies then became even larger. In September 2001, $22,150 was slated for deposit. Less than half that amount, $10,282, actually made it into the Bank of Montreal. A few months later, in January 2002, $16,843 was to be deposited in the housing account instead of the $7,050 actually received.

The forensic report also said there may be other missing receipts that the investigation did not uncover, which would mean there is more money gone than the figure of $296,353.79 found to be missing when Cheezo was suspended with pay in May 2005.

From summer 2002 until her suspension, Cheezo was employed as the band's housing administrator. During this time, she had full access to the filing cabinet where the money was stored.




"The normal reaction of somebody in a trusted position would have been to quickly make a report to whichever authorities she chose; police, council or staff"
WASKAGANISH FIRST NATION

"Money was collected in big wads of cash and it would just sit there," said a source close to the investigation who wished to remain anonymous. "The envelopes were many inches thick."

After the missing money was noticed, says the report, Cheezo was asked for an explanation. She said she first noticed a problem in September 2004.

"According to Ms. Cheezo this was the first time there had been any problem with missing funds," said the report. "Ms. Cheezo did not report the theft either to the police, Council or Waskaganish staff."

The report said that other possible explanations for the missing money could include an outside individual stealing the money while the office was open, although it mentioned there were never any signs of breaking and entering.

It is unlikely, the report added, that someone could enter the office three times without being seen or reported and walk out with large envelopes of money. In any event, Cheezo never reported any thefts to the police.

"The normal reaction of somebody in a trusted position would have been to quickly make a report to whichever authorities she chose; police, council or staff," read the report. "It is the duty of a fiduciary to give the utmost care for monies entrusted to him or her."

The band is deciding what its next steps will be after the report concluded that it would be difficult to recover the missing money. They are contemplating legal action, which would probably be long and arduous.

Some people at the band council are talking about laying criminal charges, others want to get money back, period. A third option is restorative justice. Or, the community could simply forgive the theft and move on.

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Khayden Otter-Rupert
recovering after skull surgery

by Steve Bonspiel

Brave. Inspiring. Heroic.

These words best describe Khayden Otter-Rupert in his courageous battle to live.

The little fighter from Waswanipi has been struggling for a normal life for over two-and-a-half years. During that time, he has had several surgeries to repair his heavily damaged skull. In the latest one, doctors removed two of the little boy's ribs, split them and re-built the left side of his cranium to protect his vulnerable head.

Dr. Montes of the Montreal Children's Hospital, who worked on Khayden, explained the need for the surgery.

"He was very sick when he first got here [in February 2004]," said Dr. Montes. "We had to take off the bone flap of the craniotomy. We had to make a big bag to give space to the brain because it was extremely swollen and leave the bone out because if we put it back the pressure in the brain would go very high," said Dr. Montes, who admitted that if the inter-cranial pressure of 50 climbed to 60, Khayden would not have made it. Normal pressure is around 15.

"He got a local infection, but it wasn't serious. Once everything was clean, we put the bone back. Half of the bone survived," he said.

The problem, Dr. Montes told the Nation, is when the bone is taken out it's not in contact with blood or nutrients anymore. Even though it was frozen and doctors tried to preserve the structure and bone cells, quite often the bone doesn't survive.

"Then when we put it back the bone disappeared," Dr. Montes continued. "He lost half of the bone flap. The interior half took and that survived, but the back part disappeared and he had a big hole there. As we had to remove quite a big part of the brain on that side, his scalp really sunk in. It didn't look good. Plus if he got another injury there, he could get seriously hurt."

He is recovering very well after the most recent surgery. Khayden was vibrant and playful during a visit to the hospital by the Nation. He didn't seem to care that he had just underwent a five-hour surgery, nor does he realize how many people are praying for him to pull through. He was quite content to play with his toys and video games.

"I'm happy for him that he's doing well," said his mother Judy. "I was nervous because the operation took five hours and the doctor had said it would take two hours."

She could hardly contain herself during the long wait. "He almost made me cry when I saw him, with his head like that. The doctors did their best and I hope he's going to be alright."

The incident that changed Khayden's life occurred February 8, 2004, when his foster father, Trevor Spencer, severely assaulted the toddler at least twice on the head with a stick.

Spencer pled guilty October 26, 2004, and was sentenced to 54 months in prison on January 11, 2005. He is currently free and believed to be living in Western Canada.

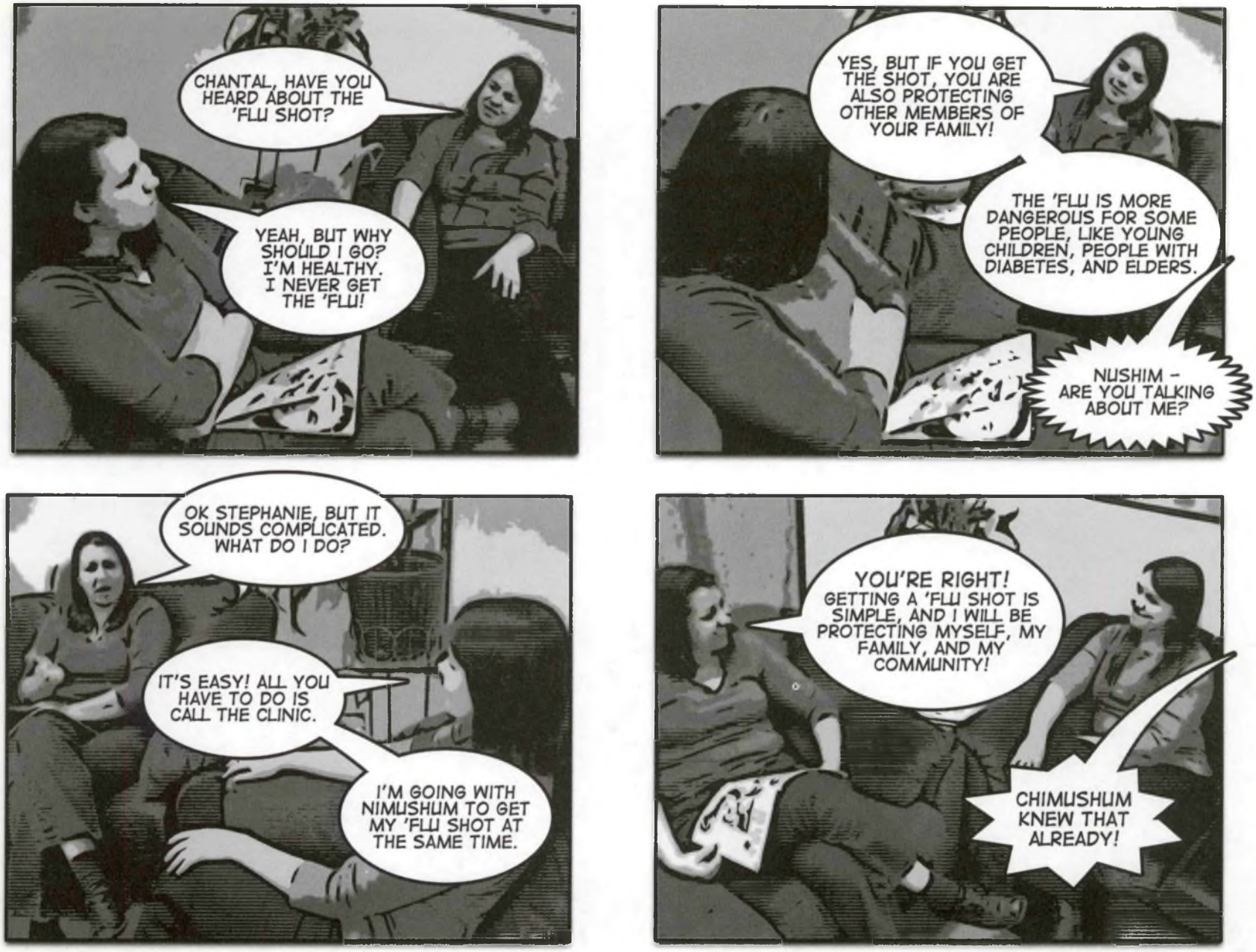
The prognosis for Khayden is good and bad, according to Dr. Montes.

"He's progressing all the time and he's walking quite well now," he said. "He's always going to be paralyzed on the right side. That we cannot recover. But as you see, he has learned to function with his left very well. He walks and he runs. He doesn't have fine finger movements, but he helps himself with that hand. He is also missing the right visual field, but has learned to compensate very well. He doesn't bump into things and he runs straight."

Dr. Montes also said that the operation would only be deemed a success after a few months of monitoring Khayden. They will have to keep an eye on the amount of spinal fluid that builds up in his head. The fluid is drained by a shunt, which is the tube that transfers the liquid from the left side of his head into his abdominal cavity.

"It's been hard for us in and out of the hospital. I can't sleep, I'm always thinking about him," said Judy.

Khayden plays with his mother Judy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YES, BUT IF YOU GET THE SHOT, YOU ARE ALSO PROTECTING OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY!
THE 'FLU IS MORE DANGEROUS FOR SOME PEOPLE, LIKE YOUNG CHILDREN, PEOPLE WITH DIABETES, AND ELDERS.
NUSHIM – ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ME?
OK STEPHANIE, BUT IT SOUNDS COMPLICATED. WHAT DO I DO?
IT'S EASY! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS CALL THE CLINIC.
I'M GOING WITH NIMUSHUM TO GET MY 'FLU SHOT AT THE SAME TIME.
YOU'RE RIGHT! GETTING A 'FLU SHOT IS SIMPLE, AND I WILL BE PROTECTING MYSELF, MY FAMILY, AND MY COMMUNITY!
CHIMUSHUM KNEW THAT ALREADY!

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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Native women to have more rights after divorce

Aboriginal women will have more rights to property if a marriage fails, Indian affairs Minister Jim Prentice proposed late last month.

Prentice is looking to the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Women's Association of Canada for guidance on legislation he hopes will level the playing field for women in abusive relationships. The public is also being consulted.

Too often, Native women are thrown into poverty once they leave their husbands. This is due partly to the fact that provincial rights to property ownership and sharing do not apply to most reserves or Aboriginal people in Canada.

NWAC blames the situation on the separation of matrilineal ideals among Native peoples who have had to adopt a foreign, patrilineal way.

The first public consultation was held in Alberta on October 8.

Investigator condemns prison conditions for Aboriginals

The federal prison system has been discriminating against Aboriginals, according to the Annual Report of the Correctional Investigator, and something must be done about it.

In his report released October 16, Canada's Correctional Investigator, Howard Sapers, found that the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) routinely classifies First Nations, Métis and Inuit inmates as higher security risks than non-native inmates.

Also, Aboriginal offenders are released later in their sentences than other inmates and they are more likely to have their conditional release revoked than other offenders.

The Sapers report also found that Aboriginal inmates often did not receive rapid access to rehabilitative programming and services that would help them return to their communities.

The report calls on the CSC to make "significant and quantifiable" progress to close the gap between Aboriginal and other offenders in terms of timely and safe conditional release. This includes ending the over-classification of Aboriginal offenders; providing timely access to programming and services to increase the number of Aboriginal inmates ready to appear before the Parole Board at their earliest eligibility dates; and increasing reliance on legislative provisions that allow for the direct involvement of Aboriginal communities in supporting the timely conditional release of inmates.

Sapers also recommends that the CSC increase the representation of its Aboriginal workforce at institutions where a majority of offenders are of Aboriginal heritage.

While Aboriginal people make up only 2.7 percent of the Canadian population, they account for 18.5 percent of the federal prison population, according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2006.

Grand Council urges UN to ratify declaration

The Grand Council of the Crees and other Native groups are pushing to ratify the United Nations declaration on Indigenous Peoples internationally by the end of the year.

Grand Council Executive Director Bill Namagoose said that the full support of UN members, including Canada, would bolster the declaration. Anything less would make it a "much weaker document," he said.

In late June, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted on the 46-article declaration. The declaration was approved, but Canada and Russia voted against the deal. Twelve other countries abstained from voting.

The declaration will now go before the United Nations General Assembly.

Since the election of Stephen Harper's Conservative government last January, Canada's position has changed in favour of toning down language it feels gives Aboriginals too much power. A clause granting "affirmed rights to sovereignty" is one of the main items the Harper government opposes.

The Grand Council of the Crees is currently circulating a petition for support of the declaration and has received over 3,000 signatures thus far.

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If you have been working for the Cree School Board as a School Secretary sometimes between July 1st, 1998 and June 30, 2006, no matter the duration of work (a day or more), you could be entitled to some money as retroactive salary adjustment.

In order to claim it, you have to complete the request form available from the Association and send it completed to the Cree School Board before January 26, 2007.

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Women's History Month Part 2

by Marie-Claude Simard

Eva Ottawa is first female Grand Chief of the Nitashkinan

Surrounded by the fall splendour of the Nitashkinan ("our nation" in the Atikamekw language) October 7, wearing a sky blue dress, Eva Ottawa became Grand Chief of the Atikamekw Nation and president of the Atikamekw Nation Council. Elected September 13 with a 75 per cent majority, Eva Ottawa is the first woman to become the leader of an entire First Nation people in the province of Quebec.

The swearing-in ceremony took place in Manawan, the community where Eva was born, 72 kilometres north of Saint-Michel-des-Saints. More than 200 people formed a human circle, within which the traditional rite took place. AFNQL Regional Chief Ghislain Picard, Manawan Chief Paul-Émile Ottawa, and Quebec's Minister for Native Affairs Geoffrey Kelley were present. "I was touched by the beauty of the ceremony," said Kelley.

With a law degree and a bachelor's degree in sociology, Eva Ottawa, 37, undertakes her four-year mandate promising to "listen a lot." The new Grand-Chief explains that women have always played an important role in the decision-making of the Atikamekw Nation and it's only been in the last few generations that they've been kept aside.

The sacred chants and drums filled the air when Eva entered the circle through the Door of the East, where the fire was burning. In her traditional moccasins she walked over the cedar-covered path up to the flagpole in the centre. Filled with great emotion, the young woman was purified while listening to the very touching Atikamekw prayer: "Ô Grand Manitou, isolated in my distress, in my difficulties, I need you."

The next morning, as though waking from a dream, Eva confided, "I felt like I did on my wedding day."

Not everything went smoothly, though. The previous Grand-Chief, Ernest Awashish never showed up and thus, was still in the illegal possession of the Staff, the Wampum, and the Atikamekw flag. "He will have a lot of explaining to do," declared a disappointed participant.

Another important part of the festivities was a highly symbolic excursion on Lake Metabeskega. Two rabaskas (traditional Atikamekw boats) were involved in this ritual. Grand Chief Ottawa and three members of the band council embarked in the first, while clan and territory chiefs in the other rabaska. Through a short expedition in the golden rays of the late afternoon, all expressed their common wish to work together as a team.

> "THE NEXT MORNING, AS THOUGH WAKING FROM A DREAM, EVA CONFIDED, I FELT LIKE I DID ON MY WEDDING DAY"

"My priority will be to improve the communication and deepen the solidarity within the Atikamekw Nation," said Ottawa.

A traditional feast ended the day. A whole moose, hunted for the occasion, was served to the hundreds of guests. The yellow pikes from the lake, prepared in a delicious local recipe, were also a welcome part of the meal. The moon, called kokom (grandmother), in her wholeness, was watching over Eva, and the rest of her community.

Glenna Matoush

The art of living an empowered life

by Amy German

Glenna Matoush is known across the globe for her masterful and celebrated canvases. She presently has works exhibited in the National Gallery, has had major shows in Toronto and Europe, was once a special invitee of the Vatican to display her work and very soon her art will be displayed in the Parliament of Canada. What might be less known about her is that in her own opinion, "It was art that saved me."

Life began for Matoush on the Rama Ojibway Reserve in Ontario and she says art has always been a part of her life. "I was always an artist. As a child I was always doodling whenever there was paper around, which wasn't very often. Sometimes I used newspaper if we happened to have one or come across one or could afford one."

Her inspiration came from within the family. "I was lucky I had two older brothers who are artists and I was influenced by them at a very young age. I was raised there in Rama and I moved to Mistissini when I had my kids."

Married life was not bliss however, says Matoush. "I was living in a very abusive relationship. I was severely abused physically and mentally."

Art gave her an out. After her children grew up, Matoush was given the opportunity to go to an art show in Quebec City. "I left with a small little bag and my passport and I never came back to Mistissini for 10 years."

She went on to explain that, "Back then there was no support systems for women who lived in my situation so I left everything."

She sought comfort with friends she had made in Montreal's gay community. "I had friends who were artists and they happened to be gay and one of them was a professor of art and he helped me. They [the gay community] supported me and they hugged me, hugged me, hugged me."

It was through one of these artists that Glenna began her own journey to becoming a successful artist. "Kevin Kelly was artist in residence at Bishop's University. He arranged for me to have a studio also at Bishop's for three or four months. I was treated like a queen."

With the opportunity to reconnect with her artistic side and a chance to lick her wounds, Matoush had a revelation, she says. "I was convinced that there was no turning back. He [Kelly] taught me to be strong and to never go back, this was the situation I lived in. He and my gay friends were my support system. That is why I have so much respect for all gay people. I am not gay but I deeply respect and love them."

Turbulent times still followed for Matoush and it took years before her artistic career really took off. At times her ex-husband would find her and she would have to move. She did not settle down until years later when she finally found love again with her present husband and settled down on Montreal's Parc Avenue where she presently has a studio.

It was not just the gay community that helped Matoush heal from her two decades of mistreatment, however. The Cree Nation also played a big role in her life and particularly in her art. "The Cree always supported me too, the Mistissini band always supported me. My relationship with them is very good. There has always been respect between myself and the band council, with the chief and starting with Henry Mianscum."

In regards to her art, "There is not much Ojibway about my work, it's mostly Cree influenced since my life has been with the Cree. They are my favourite people!"

It seems the influence in her work is not a matter of rejecting her Ojibway side but going with what she knows. "The Cree is such a big part of my life, even though I live in downtown Montreal. I mean I am not going to do city scenes and crap like that, I want to do what comes from my heart and what affects me and how changes affect me."

She gives the example of some of her recent works from this past August. "I anointed my paper in the Eastmain River."

Looking at her life then and now, Matoush recognizes the level of difficulty she experienced fleeing such an abusive situation. For those suffering the same fate she recommends they "get out somehow, find some way to get out of the situation and to run. I would say come to Montreal to a women's centre and get some counselling, a support system."

For these women, she went on to explain, "They don't see that there is going to be light after the situation ends. But there is very much life to live. You will find light and a glorious life can await you still. It just takes a little time and help."

Her message to the women in her community was this: "Women, we have power and we don't even know it! We have power and we just have to present it to the world but we have the power and it's in our grasp. We just have to recognize that we have the power to not be beaten. I wish that every woman out there would realize that they have it like I have it. I have it now. I am empowered."

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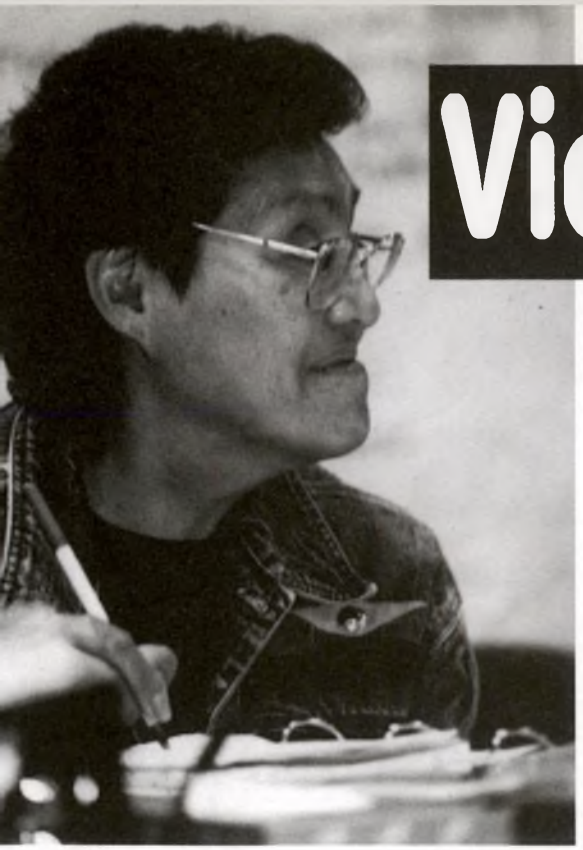


Violet Pachanos

by Amy German

Blazing a political trail in a man's world

Thirty some odd years ago, when Violet Pachanos took a job as a civil servant, little did she know that at the time that it was the beginning of her political career.

"I was 'just' a civil servant like everybody else," Pachanos says. "I applied for a job within the civil service and it was National Health and Welfare, and not in the Aboriginal side of anything."

For 20 years Pachanos lived in Ottawa without any involvement in the politics of the Cree, but when negotiations started with the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, things changed.

"I was still living out in Ottawa when the James Bay agreement was still in court for negotiation," she recounts. "That is when I got involved in it and I eventually I went to the Grand Council to set up their offices. So I did that and eventually I resigned from the civil service and came to work for the Grand Council of the Cree."

Later, Pachanos would become the first female Chief in Chisasibi. But she says that this was never a personal ambition: "I was asked to run for chief and I was surprised that I got elected."

Not only did she become chief, Pachanos served for three terms, nine years in all. Then she served as Deputy Grand Chief, and the vice chair person for the Grand Council and CRA for three years before returning to Chisasibi for another term as Chief. She currently serves as Deputy Chief in Chisasibi.

Despite all of her success in politics, the road was not always easy. Pachanos did face opposition from the community upon becoming the first elected female Cree Chief.

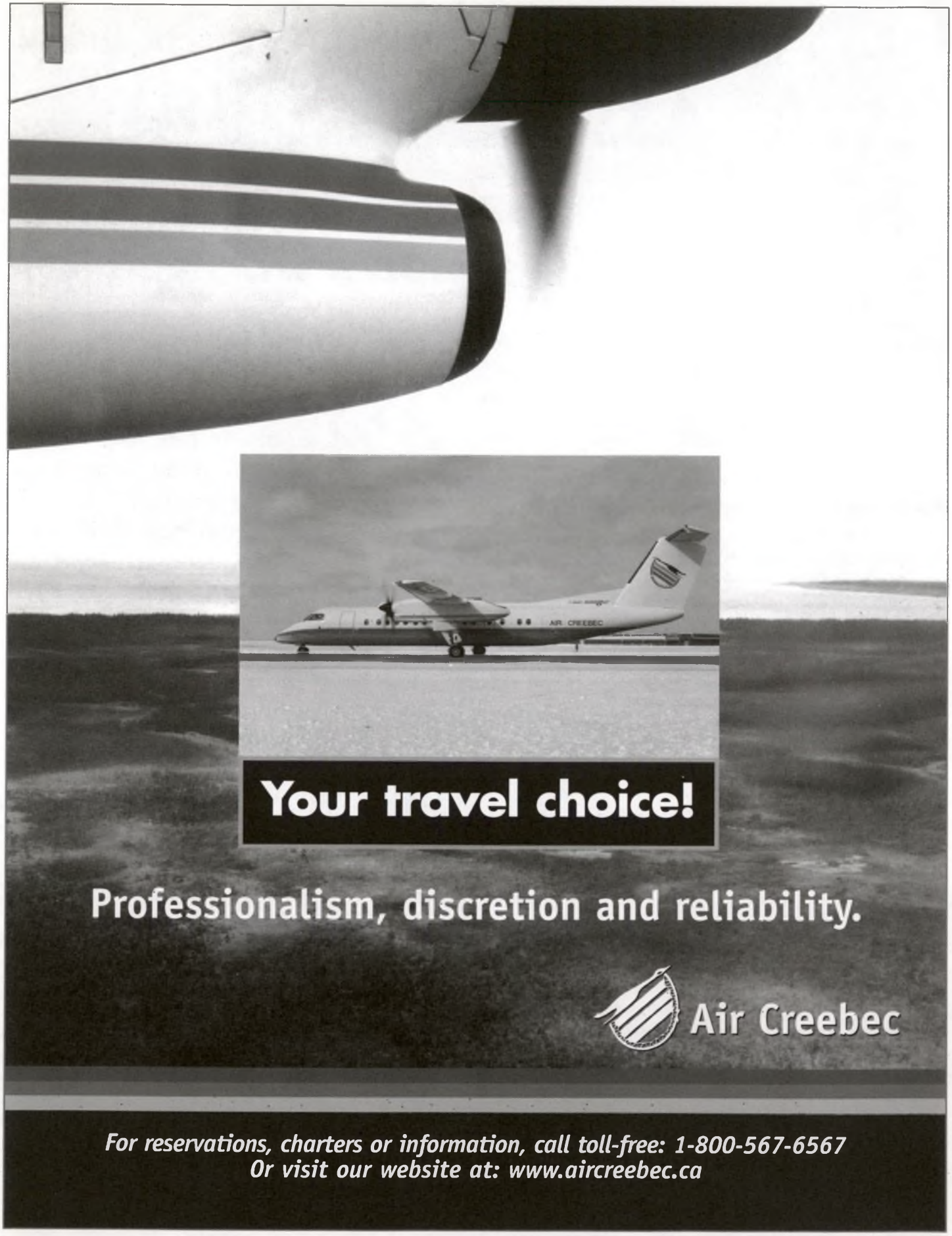
"Even as chief they [men in the community] used to say, 'Well, that's not for a woman.'"

Despite what the public might have thought about her being both a woman and a leader, Pachanos never let that get in the way of getting the job done. "That didn't bother me. I never used the fact that I was a woman. I just wanted to do things and get them done. I have always said, 'Whatever a man can do, he can be a boss and do things and a woman can do the same things.'"

> **"That didn't bother me. I never used the fact that I was a woman. I just wanted to do things and get them done"**

When asked whether her political tenure was out of popularity, she responded, "I don't know about popularity but people seem to think I manage to get things done."

Amazingly, Pachanos comes across as uniquely humble. When asked what she likes best about her job she speaks enthusiastically of how much she enjoys the challenges. "Especially in the communities when you plan for something and you see it happening and people are happy with it, it's an accomplishment."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Mary Two-Axe Earley

Epic battle for Native wome's justice

by Amy German

She may have come into politics late in life but had it not been for Mary Two-Axe Earley, it is hard to say where Canada's Aboriginal women would be in terms of having full rights under Canada's Indian Act. Two-Axe Earley was a crusader, a feminist, a mother, a wife and a woman whose courage, tenacity and personal sense of justice changed the lives of literally thousands of women and children for generations to come.

She was born on October 4, 1911, at Kahnawake. At the age of 18, Earley moved to Brooklyn, New York, a common practice for many Mohawks who found well-paying jobs in construction. A few years later, Mary met Edward Earley, an Irish-American electrical engineer who she married.

Her marriage to a non-Indian at that time meant the end of her Indian Status and for any children she would have under provisions of the Indian Act passed in 1876. This meant that she no longer had the right to live on the reserve from which she came, she could not own land there or have a vote or any kind of stake in the reserve's politics – or even be buried there. The law had been enacted during the Victorian era, a time where women were viewed as possessions of their husbands and could not therefore be land owners. However, madly in love, this was of little concern for Mary Two-Axe at the time she married.

It was not until 1966 when a friend of Mary's died in her arms one morning that her 20-year battle for status rights began. Two-Axe Early was 55 at the time and still living in Brooklyn. Her friend, also a Mohawk, had lost her status by marrying a Mohawk from another community and had been ordered to sell her house and leave the reserve. Though her friend may have died of heart failure, Mary was convinced that it was her friend's situation with her status that had broken her heart and that had contributed to her death.

"Her marriage to a non-Indian at that time meant the end of her Indian Status and for any children she would have under provisions of the Indian Act passed in 1876"

"Early began her campaign for equal rights for First Nation's Women in 1967 by founding a provincial organization known as Equal Rights for Indian Women"

Early began her campaign for equal rights for First Nation's Women in 1967 by founding a provincial organization known as Equal Rights for Indian Women. She wrote letters, made speeches and tried to appeal to various governmental task forces and ministers with various submissions. Still, she did not have much support from her male counterparts in the band councils who believed that granting equal rights to women would result in assimilation thus undermining Aboriginal authority. They also argued that granting new status to women and children who had been excluded would be far too expensive.

When the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was formed in 1967, Two-Axe Early was urged by women's rights advocate Thérèse Casgrain to submit a Parliamentary brief concerning the loss of status for aboriginal women. The brief led to a deputation before the Commission to protest what should be their birthright.

Two-Axe Early lost her husband in 1969 and out of loneliness returned to Kahnawake to live in a family home she had inherited from her grandmother. She did not legally have the right to live there at the time, and it was made very clear to her that she was indeed unwelcome. Indeed, in 1975 she was evicted under the provisions of the Indian Act.

INVITATIONAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL ISSUES :
FAMILY VIOLENCE, SUICIDE AND SEXUAL ABUSE AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ISSUES AFFECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

Mission

To gather Cree people to a regional forum where wholistic healing experiences can be shared on various social issues.

Goals & Objectives

To share the knowledge, experiences and outcomes of community initiates geared towards addressing social issues.

To strengthen the movement towards healing, healthy and peace in Cree communities

Agenda Topics

Family Violence

Prevention, awareness, consequences thus elaborating that violence is criminal and intolerable.
Informing women of their rights as individuals and spouses.

Sexual Abuse

Definition os sexual offences, informing women of their rights, and an education and awareness campaign, how to seek help for victims and abusers.

Suicide

Implementing community committees to take the responsibility in sustaining the community engament process and ensuring specific initiatives are developed and evaluated; early prevention to help with potentially suicidal individuals.

Residential School Issues

Impacts and effects of the Residential School years

The Mistissini Native Woman's Association is extending an invitation to aboriginal/cree women to attend a regional conference in Vald'Or on

November 28, 29, 30, 2006 at the Forestele Motel.

A limited number of 100 people will be accepted. Deadline for registrations: November 10, 2006.
For registration and additional information contact: Karen Trapper and Sharon Mianscum at (418) 923-3343
Organizing team: Annie M. Blacksmith/Jane Blacksmith
N.B.: All participants are responsible for their travel and accomodations.

Prior to that, in 1970, the Status of Women had began advocating on her behalf, arguing that the Indian Act was indeed discriminatory towards women and that new legislation should be enacted to repeal the sections of the act that discriminated against them. Still the law did not change until much later.

"In 1983, impressed by her drive and commitment to the rights of First Nation women, Quebec Premier René Lévesque gave Two-Axe Early his support"

At the time of her eviction from her family's Kahnawake home in 1975, Mary had been attending the International Women's Year conference in Mexico. The timing could not have been more ideal as she was able to use the conference as a platform for her cause and an international media frenzy ensued. As a result, the eviction was overturned.

Giving steam to Two-Axe's campaign, in 1981 the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that Canada had broken the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This came about as another Native, Sandra Lovelace, a Maliseet from the Tobique Reserve in New Brunswick, had appealed to United Nations Human Rights Committee because her rights too had been revoked when she and her children tried to return to her reserve in 1977 after marrying a non-native. Canada had at the time responded to the UN that while they desired to change the law, they could not as it was the responsibility of the First Nation's communities and they themselves could not come to an agreement.

In 1983, impressed by her drive and commitment to the rights of First Nation women, Quebec Premier René Lévesque gave Two-Axe Early his support. Refused by ministers at a constitutional conference where she had requested to speak on behalf of her campaign, Lévesque offered up his own seat to Mary so that she could make her plea for the rights and freedom of her sisters.

Finally, on June 28, 1985, after almost 20 years of fighting, it happened, the Canadian Parliament passed Bill C-31 and full rights were restored to women who had married non-natives and to the generations of children produced by those marriages. The Indian Act was amended as it was brought into accord with the equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the discrimination under the act was finally over, for good. At the age of 73, Mary Two-Axe Early became the first woman to regain her Indian Status.

In the years that followed, Mary continued her advocacy as some bands tried fighting the new clauses in the Indian Act by not reinstating women who had married non-natives. At 83 she served as a witness for the Native Council of Canada, when three bands from Northern Alberta tried to deny the rights of these women.

Two-Axe Early testified as to the plight of women who had been expelled from reserves, their hardships and what they faced. She brought up how in Kahnawake's, Protestants and Catholics have their own cemeteries and there was a separate cemetery for dogs, but if you had married a non-native, you could not be buried there. With that testimony the courts determined that it was up to the government and not the bands that would have the last say when it came to being a member of a band.

Mary Two-Axe Earley finally died on August 21, 1996, of respiratory failure. She was laid to rest exactly where she had fought to be, in Kahnawake cemetery. Before the time of her death she received many awards from the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case, an award reserved for outstanding Canadian women, the Order of Quebec and a National Aboriginal Achievement Award. York University in Toronto also granted her an honorary Doctorate of Laws degree.

Still sorrowfully missed, Mary Two-Axe Early was a revolutionary and an outstanding individual.

The Cree Indian Centre of Chibougamau (CICC) would like to take this opportunity to honor all the Native Women for the "Women's History Month, 2006"!

The CICC has launched a women's group in Chibougamau this month. There will be a variety of empowerment workshops, group discussions and social activities such as sewing and cooking. Welcome to all the aboriginal women!

For more information, please call at the CICC, (418)-748-7667

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EDITH CLOUTIER

by Amy German

As a fifteen-year-old, Edith Cloutier started out as the Val D'Or Friendship Centre's dishwasher, by twenty-three she was its executive director and now seventeen years later the centre has undergone its own rags to riches story under her watchful eye.

"I have been involved in the Friendship Center Movement since I was a young girl I guess, so the friendship center has always been part of my life," she says nostalgically. Cloutier is the product of an Algonquin, Abenaki mother and French, Quebecois father though she says, "I have been all my life following more of my mother's path."

She later attended UQAT, the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue and obtained a bachelors degree in accounting which led to her taking over the Centre's direction at the young age of 23, she explains, "when I graduated the executive directors position had been open for more that a year. It was because the Friendship Center board at the time really wanted to have an Aboriginal person to take over the center because we weren't that many first nation's graduates with a background in management." Reluctant about her age and the position she took on the center anyway which at the time was in a small building on 6th street and employed thirteen people. Says Cloutier, "now today, we are running a day care center, programs from early childhood, right up to elders. With the day care center, we now have up to 90 people working at the Friendship Center and 70% of our staff are now First Nation's."

Cafeteria worker

She laughs and says, "but hey its not like I did this all by myself. I have been in partnership with the right people and making the people really believe that we can do something for urban aboriginal people in Val D'Or, not just those moving to the city but for all of those who come through Val D'Or."

Since 1974 the Friendship Centre in Val D'Or has been providing a hostel service to a great deal of the Cree community who are either traveling through Val D'Or, or who have come to the city center for health services and for pregnant women who come to give birth at the hospital near by. Cloutier describes it as "a home away from home."

"I think that (Friendship Centers) we all share the same mission, which is to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people living or passing through urban areas"

The Val D'Or Friendship Centre is one of 119 centres across the country. Though very few of them probably function the way that Val D'Or's does, says Cloutier, "I think that (Friendship Centers) we all share the same mission, which is to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people living or passing through urban areas. We also keep alive our culture and our traditions and language. And we also work very hard to maintain positive relations between the native and non-native communities in Val D'Or."

What really separates this friendship from the others is its financial autonomy and its focus on socioeconomic development. According to her, "the day we decided that we were not going to depend on government funding anymore, we closed our books last March with a total revenue of $3 000 000.00." Says Cloutier, "we chose about maybe ten years ago that we were going to stop looking at getting all of these grants and contributions to help us reach that mission because we said there is no way to develop and move on, if we always ask around for grants."

So the center focussed on developing every aspect of its business that it could with reinvestment in mind, generating services to generate new jobs with the profits coming back for more social and community development.

The Friendship Center did this via opening up cafeteria seven days a week and the hostel service to natives and non-natives thus creating a meeting place for the whole area population that can be rented out for various purposes. The cafeteria now also provides a catering service for events at the center. They also have an arts and crafts shop and a daycare service that they opened up as a separate corporation so that provincial funding for daycare can be poured back into the Friendship Center as an alternative source of revenue. Always thinking ahead, while the daycare was being built, the center ran training

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programs for daycare educators so that when the center opened, First Nation educators would be able to work in the facility. Says Cloutier, "So that's why in Val D'Or its all in the perspective of having a social entrepreneur-ship vision of how we meet a social and community development mission."

With so much success under her belt with Val D'Or Cloutier was inspired to become the president for the provincial association of friendship centers, called the Regroupement Centre d'Amitié autochtone du Quebec. She describes it as being a link, "advocating on the behalf of aboriginal people in our area, in the province of Quebec by having representation at the assembly of First Nation of Quebec-Labrador forum and to raise that issue and reality that urban aboriginals go through."

Though reserve issues can be dramatically different from urban issues, Cloutier says that urban aboriginals are often " the forgotten ones of our people." And while she recognizes that Chiefs and reserves already have their own problems, more and more natives are moving to city centers.

A big problem for Friendship Centers is that, says Cloutier, "the realities in the urban areas are not well known at this point in Quebec, compared to out west. And I think that we have to, it has to become a common priority for leadership, all of the First Nation's leadership in Quebec, not just AFNQL, but the Grand Council of the Crees, the Inuit, and the Makivik. Cloutier wants to see the aboriginals of cities recognized as a responsibility of the Grand Council and also see their issues addressed. She cites Montreal as a major problem area in terms of the Friendship Centres, "there is a major organizational problem there, I am very concerned about that. Not just because its people without good intentions or anything like that, that are taking over, we have to analyze the problem but the bottom of it is that we are not supported, we are left out on our own." As far as she is concerned, "Friendship Centers that provide services to Cree people should be supported by the grand council."

For Cloutier, her life with the Friendship Centre has been nothing but rewarding and her work ultimately makes her happy, "its not a job … It's a life." At the same time she also sees it as her fate, as though she truly right where she is supposed to be in life, "Its (the Friendship Centre) been part of me and I guess the path, that was my path."

DR. EMILY FARIES

EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO SELF GOVERNMENT

by Amy German

Dr. Emily Faries, Ph.D, was the first Aboriginal woman from the James Bay area to earn a doctorate and is largely responsible for the history textbook that is now being used at the Cree School Board. She is a major reason that the children of the North have a textbook that tells the truth about their own people.

Emily was born and raised in the Moose Cree First Nation. But her father came from Fort Albany and her mother from the Waskaganish region and she is a beneficiary of the James Bay Agreement. "We do have strong connections with Northern Quebec Crees," she says.

"My first teachers were my parents, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents and I firmly believe that those first teachers, the natural teachers were the ones that laid out the foundation as to what my life was to become"

When the government relocated First Nation people to the reserves, her parents settled in Moose Factory and joined the Moose Cree First Nation. Being on a reserve gave Emily the advantage of not having to go to a residential school; instead she attended the federal day school. Even still, she says, "the curriculum was the same as what was being taught in the residential school, we did not learn about our own culture, nor our history, nor our language."

As far as Faries is concerned, her education did not begin with any kind of governmental institution but rather with her family. "My first teachers were my parents, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents and I firmly believe that those first teachers, the natural teachers were the ones that laid out the foundation as to what my life was to become," she says.

"My connection to the land in essence is my connection to the creator," she adds, explaining how her foundation in spiritual values helped to have a very positive impact on her view of life

Women History Month:
Aboriginal Women, the Journey forward.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and honour all the women of the Cree nation. Since the beginning of time, the Creator had a mission for our women; to bring balance to the life of the community, to raise strong and wise children and to be care givers. Were would we stand as a nation without the strength, the dedication, and the love of all the women around us.

Let's all honour our women not only this month of October but every day of the year!

From the Chief and Council of the Cree Nation of Wemindji.

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and helped prepare her to deal with life's problems.

Her mother was responsible in the family for keeping traditions alive but it was her father, a WWII veteran, who "knew that education was so important he really pushed education with all of us and there were 10 children in our family." Having travelled the world as a soldier, her father believed that education was at the core of social change and was the best means of helping the Aboriginal people.

After obtaining her first Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology, Emily went into an education program at Laurentian University in Sudbury. With her second degree in hand, she returned to her community where she was one of the first Native teachers.

Faries spent almost a decade teaching there before becoming principal. A few years later, she returned to school herself to obtain a Master's degree in education from the University of Toronto.

Then she worked as an education consultant to First Nation people, including helping the Assembly of First Nations on their National Education Study. It was at that point that she decided to pursue her Ph.D. as she had developed an interest in research. She went back to the University of Toronto and in 1991 Dr. Emily Faries became the first Aboriginal woman from the James Bay area to earn a doctorate.

"I have been blessed with many opportunities," she observes. "I should say no matter what I was doing I always sought guidance from the Creator in whatever I was doing."

At a time when the Aboriginal people are working towards self-determination and self-governance, Faries feels fortunate that she can contribute through her work: "Education is key to reaching the ultimate goal of becoming self governing."

Faries also worked with the Cree School Board back in the early 1990s. "I wrote a paper for them on Cree as a Language of Instruction, about its advantages to Cree children being taught their own languages first in the early grades with a gradual introduction to a second in the early grades. I prepared the paper for the General Assembly of the Crees."

That was not her last stint at the board however, says Faries.

"I wrote a history textbook from the Native perspective that is used in the Cree School Board's history program. I would say it's the real history because we talk about the historical journey of the First Nations people and how various elements impacted the people."

What perhaps differs from the standard textbook used by the rest of the province is that in her book, A History of Quebec and Canada, a Native Perspective, the history of the Crees and Quebec's European settlers is actually told. The book looks at the impact of the fur trade, colonization, the residential school system, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the hydro-electric development.

Unfortunately, the book isn't used outside the Cree school system. "I think that there is a dire need of awareness among the Canadian population on what I would call the real history of what happened to First Nations People upon contact with Europeans," Faries says. "A lot of people don't know that, even Native people don't know that."

Faries also believes that Canadians as a whole need to be educated on the historical journey of First Nations people. "If they understood or knew the historical journey then they would understand why we are in a situation where why we are making land claims and why are we fighting for Aboriginal rights."

Dr. Faries says her people are in mourning, trying to heal themselves. "We are grieving for all of the losses so there is loss of identity, loss of culture, loss of language, loss of our traditional land.Healing and empowerment and education play a big role because as individuals, as we gain higher education we are able to work for our people and that is part of our healing and empowerment. We are taking our power back!

"What we are moving towards really is self-determination and to have our own governing systems. It's really simple, we are just going back. We are in the process of regaining control in our lives and we know that it's never going to be exactly the way it was before but we can bring back the values and the structures that work for us to our own institutions or systems. Education is the key to our success!"

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HALLOWEEN games... or how to keep the kids from climbing the walls

by Amy German

A Halloween party is always a great way for people to come together and celebrate the best of the season, but managing a room full of kids on a sugar high can sometimes be a hassle. That's why it's always best to keep it structured and plan out games and activities to keep them busy, happy and out of mischief. Here are some great Halloween party games and fun crafts that are ideal for a party, a classroom or even a day-care.

Hot potato with pumpkins

This game requires nothing more than a small pumpkin (real or plastic) and kids. Have the kids sit around in a circle and play some music as the kids pass the pumpkin around. Stop the music suddenly and the child holding the pumpkin is out. Continue until there is only one kid left and give the winner a prize.

Pumpkin decorating

For little kids who want to carve their own pumpkins but are not yet ready to use knives, let them make their own pumpkins to decorate out of papier-mâché. Inflate balloons and have the kids cover them with papier-mâché. Mix one part water to one part flour and torn-up strips of newspaper. Once everything has dried, have the kids paint their creations orange and paint on a face. This kind of activity also works with pumpkins and markers but with this year's pumpkin shortage the home made variety may prove less expensive and keep the kids busier for longer.

The mummy game

Put kids together in groups of two with a roll of toilet paper. When the signal is given kids then have to wrap their partner in toilet paper like a mummy. The first pair to empty their roll wins.

Pin the wart on the witch or pin the mouth on the ghost

This is pin the tail on the donkey, Halloween style. Get a large cut out of a witch or ghost. If you can't buy one, draw one on poster board. Blindfold the children and give them either chewing gum or wall tack gum for a witch or a cut out of a mouth for a ghost. Spin the child around and direct them to the poster board. Closest one wins.

Candy counting guesses

Take a large jar or bowl, count out a finite amount of candy such as candy corn, lollipops, jelly beans or whatever else available that is Halloween themed. Have the kids take guesses, closest one wins the candy.

Spooky corners

Put up large pictures of Halloween type images in the corners of the room such as a jack-o-lantern, a witch, black cats, ghosts, etc. Let the kids run around the room, preferably in a circle, play music and randomly stop it. When the music stops the kids will have to pick a corner to run to. Randomly choose different corners for the kids to be out. Keep playing until there is a winner, give the winner a prize.

Apple, orange or ball pass

Arrange the kids into lines. The object of the game is to pass the object from underneath one's chin to the next person's without dropping it and without the use of hands or anything else. This is a kind of relay race that does not involve actual running around. If a person drops it, the object needs to start again at the beginning of the line. The first line to get the apple, orange or whatever other objects you want to use without dropping it wins.

What am I

All you need for this one is a bunch of paper print outs of different Halloween themed pictures, some tape and a gaggle of kids. Tape an image on to the back of each child and have them sit around on the floor. Have the other children give the child hints as to what is taped to their backs without giving it away. This can be a fun game for kids of any age.

Spider Hunt

All you need for this one is whatever quantity of black plastic spiders and a prize. Hide spiders around the room before the children arrive. Send them on a scavenger hunt and the kid with the most spiders at the end wins the prize.

Halloween balloons

Blow up some orange and black balloons. The balloon must stay in the air at all times but before the child hits it they must say a Halloween word, if the kid hits the balloon without saying a Halloween word first or lets the balloon fall to the ground is out. Halloween words can be anything from different kinds of costumes, Halloween foods, types of candies, characters from spooky stories and so on. This is also a good game for smaller children to help them learn vocabulary and be creative.

These suggestions are generally geared towards younger children but some of them can even be played by adults at a Halloween party or if mom and dad just want to join in with the fun. Whatever the case, enjoy this time while it lasts because Christmas is just around the corner.

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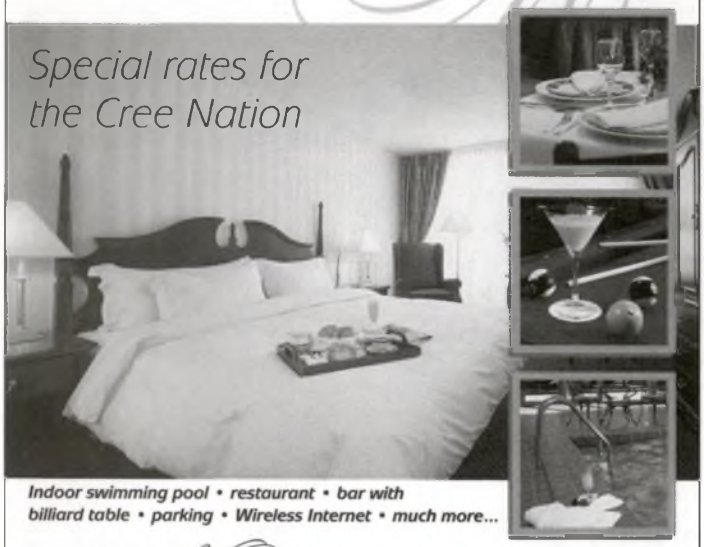

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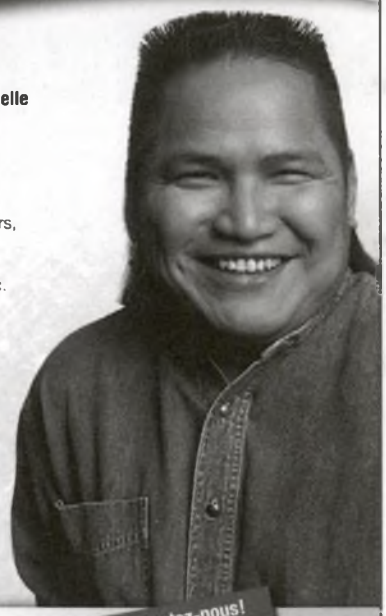

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82, 1e Avenue Est Amos
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by Amy German

Putting the Fun in Functional

It's that time of year again, when we adorn our homes with pumpkins and all things scary, don costumes and gorge on candy… yup, it's Halloween!

Many kids will be dreaming of dressing up as their fave superhero from the movies, a Barbie princess or as a popular toy. These costumes can often be difficult to find or purchase, however, particularly if you live somewhere remote or just don't want to shell out that much on something that expensive.

Instead, why not make a costume? Halloween doesn't need to be ridiculously expensive nor does every child in the community need to wear the same costume. Homemade costumes, especially the ones that the kids themselves get to put some labour into, can often be more fun, are frequently less expensive, can be tailored for cold weather and create some of the best childhood memories.

With just a little creativity, making Halloween costumes at home can be easier than you think. If it's going to be another cold one, the first thing to think about is warmth, which is why old jogging suits and fleece sets are a great and handy thing.

An all-black jogging suit and a toque can very easily be turned into a multitude of costumes from butterflies to lady bugs to black cats to skeletons. White suits for angels and bunnies are also a great idea, pink for pigs, brown or beige for bears and so on. They are also the perfect idea if you want to bundle your little one up in layers underneath their costume.

For winged creatures, take three old coat hangers and use a pair of needle-nose pliers to cut the tops off the hangers, twist the wires together in a loop and then form a heart shape. From there the sky is just about the limit: wings can be made out of anything from old panty hose for the gauzy variety, cardboard for the sturdier version, or you can use plastic gift wrap. Either sew material together or use a sturdy glue to paste the wings onto the coat hangers. For the cardboard variety, just make sure you trace the wings onto cardboard and give an extra inch for where you want to glue them together. You and your child can then decorate the wings with glue and glitter or ribbons, markers, whatever you both desire.

With your wings completed, have the child stand with their arms out in a T and either use a hole punch or a wool needle and thread long piece of wool or elastic to affix the wings on. Be careful not to make the wings too large, particularly with the cardboard ones for a small child; if its windy out, it will knock them over.

Crowns or antennae can easily be fashioned out of pipe cleaners and placed on top of a warm hat. Should your child want to go as an animal with ears like a bear,

cat or piggy, these can easily be sewn on to a colour co-ordinated hat. If the idea of making your own animal ears intimidates you, buy the packaged kind from the drug store, take them off of the headband and sew them on by either making slits in the hat or sewing them on top.

Headbands can look cute but they can often be too tight or just cause headaches depending on the individual, adult or child. The great thing about sewing the ears into the hat is that even after Halloween the kids can get some wear out of their special animal ear hat when they play outside. For more advice on wing construction and other suggestions go to: http://www.dltk-holidays.com/halloween/wings.htm

Super parents make super kids

If animals don't appeal to you or your kids, try a do-it-yourself super-hero. Sure, there will be plenty of Spidermans and Supermans out there this season but if you are looking for something more original, you can also make them into their own super hero. How about a Super Bill or a Super John or a Super Suzy?

Make a cape out of an old, solid-coloured towel, old flannel sheets or simply cut a large rectangle out of a piece of fun fleece and either tie the ends around the neck or affix it with a safety pin. The super suit can be made out of long johns with shorts on top or a bathing suit or a solid coloured jogging suit.

From there you can customize your child's own logo from a piece of felt or just about anything else that you would like. A big S for super or an M for mighty or even the initials of your child's name can be cut out and glued on to a circle, square or triangle of a different colour then attached to the shirt with stitches, glue or safety pins. Kids will love the opportunity to be creative and this costume is relatively easy to make yourself as there are very few limitations. http://www.dltk-holidays.com/halloween/hcost/index.asp

Boxing match

Are you good at thinking outside of the box? Cardboard boxes can make great costumes, from robots to giant Lego, to being a walking refrigerator. Gift-wrap and ribbons will transform a plain old box meant for recycling into the perfect gift box costume. Cut open the lid, add string suspenders, a handle and some clown accessories and your child can be an instant jack in the box.

If you want to go for something a little bit more elaborate and you just so happen to have lots of spare old plastic containers and a can of spray paint, it's the perfect opportunity to make a giant Lego or robot costume. Paint your box silver for a robot or a primary colour for Lego, glue on knobs made from plastic containers either painted in the same colour or for a robot, in various colours. Pretend buttons can even be made out of old bottle caps and small jar lids, glued on to the front. Add face paint and voila! Box costume can be some of the most inexpensive and creative Halloween costumes that can be made from home or just about anywhere.

If these suggestions don't thrill you, how about a giant UNICEF box, a Kleenex, a TV, an x-ray machine, a chocolate bar or box, candy box, even a car can so easily be made depending on just how much elbow grease you want to put into it. The best part of these costumes too is that they are the easiest to slip warm garments on underneath and almost always look best with a colour co-ordinated hat so it's easy to stay warm while having fun and amusing others with your creativity.

For more suggestions and more indepth instructions go to: http://www.thefamilycorner.com/family/kids/halloween/cardboard_box_costumes.shtml

Happy Halloween!

Tuning up his fiddle?

Recently, the Grand Council team working for Grand Chief Matthew Mukash has now completed the new Cree - Canada negotiations that Ted Moses began during his tenure as Grand Chief. This forthcoming and final negotiated agreement has now been given to Cabinet for approval so expect a major announcement to be given by the Government of Canada shortly. Ted Moses negotiated the Paix des Braves worth $3.5 billion. Matthew Mukash will bring us a new Cree - Canada agreement worth over $4.3 billion. As part of the new agreement with Canada, we will have three years to form our new Cree government. This is when the music will start playing again.

Leonard Matthews

Nation editors are mentally challenged

I read the article on the subject of "Drink, Dope and Damage Done." I was upset over the word "retarded" being used. I don't remember using this word as it not one that I would think of using to describe students. "Mentally challenged" or "learning difficulties" may have been more appropriate. Parents do not appreciate the word "retarded," nor do I.

Dorothy Nicholls

Referendum turnout was healthy

The August 18, 2006 issue that reports that three Chiefs denounced the Rupert River partial diversion while it mistakenly reports the Cree decision on the diversion was pushed through despite a low turnout. This is not correct.

The voter turnout rate on the Paix des Braves decision in all the Cree communities was a majority of 58 percent and 70 percent of them voted in favour. The communities conducted the referenda and the combination of the Cree community referenda became the Cree Nation decision. The community referenda were conducted only in the Cree communities and only residents were able to vote. Had the communities also provided ballot boxes in other locations the turnout would have been higher.

The turnout is always lower in Waskaganish since many voters live in Moose Factory and Amos.

The turnout rate of the community residents was similar at 61.8 % for the Grand Chief elections last year.

I assume you are reporting this by applying the number of votes in favour against the total eligible voters. With this calculation you get 38% in favour and 17% voted against but this is undemocratic. Referenda and elections are not conducted in this manner.

The results from the people who live on the Rupert River and Eastmain rivers voted 76 % in favour.

It is time that the Cree decision on this issue be accepted and reported properly. The campaign to undermine the results of this important Cree referendum has hurt Cree Nation democracy. We should be all proud that we have the most sophisticated and transparent decision-making processes in North America.

Bill Namagoose

Where was OJ?

I am so surprised that OJ didn't bring anything to the Assembly to be discussed. For instance the housing, we have a lot of mold problems and it's affecting our people's health. One of the social problems comes from housing shortage: overcrowding of homes. It affects my people in all areas of life. I could just imagine what kind of negative comments will surface. I just want to say to the people it's time we think positive and to help the community and our members are affected. Families live in a two-bedroom duplex with at least five to seven family members without a back door. I am concerned.

Judy W. Capissisit

Help Will help George

Hi, Will: I enjoyed meeting you at Wemindji – the former Paint Hills. At that time you said that you might be able to help me get a publishable photo of Marble Island – near Rankin Inlet – because I lost all images of that portion of my trip when I dropped my camera in a river. If so, please tell me who to call or e-mail. An aerial or land shot will do, preferably with no people because of the need for photo permission, but a photo with people "distant" would be better than nothing.

George Erickson

(Ed. Note. If anyone can help this gentleman out could you give me a call at 514-272-3077 or email me at nation@beesum.ca as it would be much appreciated. - Will Nicholls)

My bro rocks the ice

My brother Blake Bosum, his first time on the ice he was three years old when my dad gave him a little taste of what his future will be. His dream was always hockey, if he was not playing hockey around the house.

Blake was either wearing a hockey helmet or a hockey stick. He loved hockey so much he started a very young age to young but, my dad loved hockey too.

I always knew that the love he has for the game would take him beyond his imagination. He persevered, he strived to be the best that he could be, and he succeeded and he is a rising star.

Looking at him play hockey and other people watching him I think to myself that's my little brother they are cheering on. His love for hockey remains in his blood, watching my brother play hockey as a child always reminds today, how much I am so proud to of him and love him dearly. His height 6'3" never intimidates. Even though I'm only 5'5" he will always be my baby brother. He made the team in Qubec City. He is and will remain my hero in the hockey world!

Olivia Couchees

Sugar is a killer

I'm baffled by what's happening in our communities. Cree Health Board's Public Health department tells us that diabetes and obesity are at epidemic proportions among the Cree population.

There have been numerous media communications (radio shows, expositions, pamphlets, posters, magazine and newspaper articles) to point this out in no uncertain terms. Physical contests have been initiated, different groups, entities fund raise with proceeds going to health care and more media awareness.

BUT ... walk into most stores (Northern, Co-op, General, Corner, etc.) and the first thing you see is candy, pop, chips, gum, candy bars: stacks of sugar!

Now some people – especially those selling the sugar – will say, "You have a choice to buy or not to buy. Nobody's forcing you." Or they'll say, "Parents must teach their children."

STORES, you do have a responsibility toward our health. It cannot be, "We'll sell as much of this diabetes/obesity causing stuff as we can because we'll make more money" on the one hand while at the same time contributing money putting a "nutritional recipe" in the *Nation*.

And parents/grandparents, ours is even a greater responsibility. We must steer our children toward a healthier lifestyle; that a lot of what they do put in their mouths would be better left on the shelves.

Hey, how about this: instead of buying a ton of candy to pass out at Halloween, give out fruit, granola bars, or popcorn. Anything but sugar!!

Diabetes and obesity are life threatening!

Terry Gates

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Power of the Drum

by Xavier Kataquapit

When you take part in a traditional Pow Wow, the first thing you notice is the rhythmic beat of the drum. It is difficult to miss the deep, resounding pulse of the drumbeat. When it is played, it fills the air with an energy that attracts people to move closer to the sound. It quiets the noise of everyday life and takes over the environment and demands that everyone listen. When a traditional group of performers are playing this ancient instrument, the beat is almost hypnotic. It clears your mind instantly of any thoughts, worries and anxieties.

Traditional people describe the drum as representing Mother Earth and it is her heartbeat that is heard when the drum is played. The traditional drum is also symbolic as the mother, as when we are infants inside a womb, the heartbeat of the mother is the first sound we hear.

The drum is a sacred object that is represented and respected as if it were alive. It is described as having its own unique voice or sound and it is believed to have its own spirit. As part of this belief, there are many types of ceremonies performed by different Native groups to "awaken" the drum before it is played. When the drum is used there are ceremonies and prayers that are given by the drum-keeper and the drummers before an event. When the drum is not in use it is stored in a respectful manner and it is not treated as an object of admiration or status but rather as a symbol of spirituality.

The shape of the drum is also thought to hold great symbolism to traditional people. The circle is believed to represent a great deal of spirituality as it is seen as a perfect shape. The circle is represented through numerous traditional teachings such as the circle of life, the cycle of the seasons and the shape of heavenly objects such as the sun and moon.

The drum in human history is thought to be one of the oldest musical instruments that has ever been created by man. This instrument is common in many traditional cultures and it is often one that is rooted in deep history when societies were once closely connected to the land and the elements.

In many early cultures the drum was used as a tool of war. The drum was used a means to drive fear into the enemy and to excite and give energy to a marching army. It was also thought to be a way of spreading communications in the midst of a noisy battle. A drum could be heard by everyone and it was used to direct forces to move forward, retreat or to conduct other manoeuvres.

Through the culture of war and its use as a military weapon, the drum was turned into an instrument of competition and so it developed into newer forms where it could be represented in many different ways. The English, Scottish, Irish and other European countries developed many types of organized music based on the sound of the marching drum.

In other cultures all over the world, the rhythmic sound of the drum or the beating of a percussion instrument is the basis for just about every type of music. Whenever someone is singing or a group of people are playing several instruments, they are following a single beat in the background that is guiding their playing. The beat may change or vary but is always there to lead the other instruments.

In recent years, the basic drumbeat seems to finding its way back to people from all sorts of backgrounds. In cities and towns all over, I see groups of people coming together to hold communal drumming sessions in parks or public places. These sessions are great stress relievers and events that allow people to come together to perform a simple task that is self-satisfying and easy to do. Physically, the energy that is felt when drumming actually activates natural biochemicals that provide many positive effects to the body and mind of a person.

There is nothing like the feeling you get when you are standing near a drum played by a group of traditional First Nation drummers. When an experienced group is playing, they can move and direct your feelings in so many ways. At first, it captivates you, then it may surprise you or bring a simple calm to your soul but all the while it leaves you mesmerized and relaxed as the rest of the world diminishes.

Sometimes as I fall to sleep, I can hear the pulse of my heart in the silent dark. It reminds me of the drum and it makes me realize how such an instrument has become so powerful in our lives. What better way to represent music than by imitating the sound of our own hearts. It is a sound and an idea we can all relate to. It is a beat we can all dance to. In that way it brings us all together.

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Cover date on magazine	Volume & Issue No.	Deadline to receive ad material
2006/2007		
November 10	13-26	October 27
November 24	14-01	November 10
December 8	14-02	November 24
December 22	14-03	December 8
January 5	14-04	December 22
January 19	14-05	January 5
February 2	14-06	January 19
February 16	14-07	February 2

Pssst...

Have any information you'd like to share with the Nation?
Feel like there's something the rest of the Cree Nation should know? Do you have any stories of corruption, discrimination, or something you want exposed?

Well that's what the Nation is here for.
Call us at 514-272-3077, and we'll look into your story. We cannot guarantee anything will be written and we reserve the right to edit and leave out any libelous content, but if you don't call us, your voice won't be heard!

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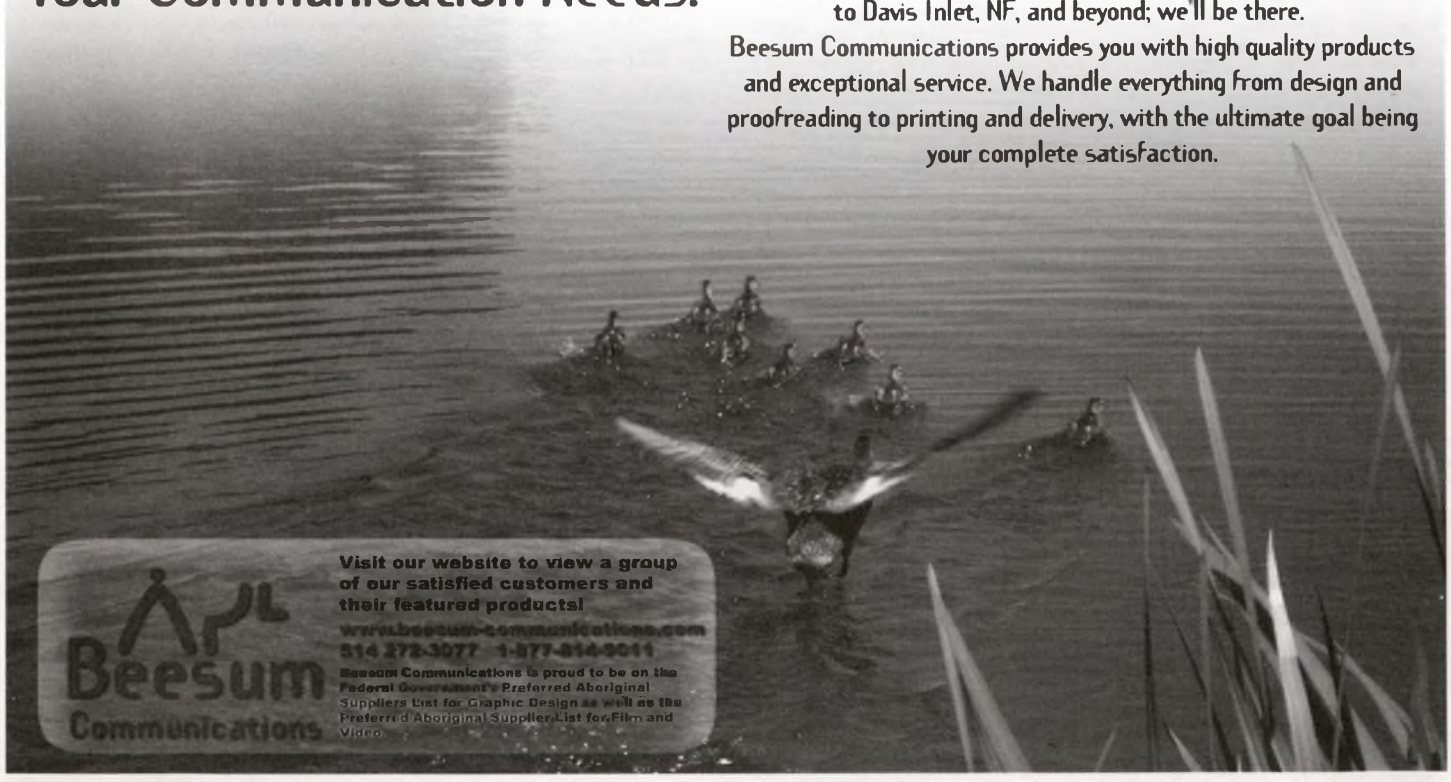
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Winter Road on the James Bay West Coast

The Services Company is working with DeBeers to upgrade the Winter Road to meet the requirements of the communities and DeBeers. This will make travel on the road much safer for all users. These upgrades are important because the road continues to be used heavily by community members to visit family in other communities, get supplies from Moosonee, transport firewood, and to get to traplines.

This year there will be many more Victor mine-related loads on the road as compared to last year. Last year there were about 650 loads of mine materials and 500 loads of fuel transported on the Winter Road. This year, it is anticipated that there will be 2,800 mine-related loads plus 700 loads of fuel.

The types of upgrades that are planned include:

Addition of a separate, groomed snowmobile trail alongside the road

Widening the road right of way to 30m, so that a 12 to 15m road bed and a 3m snowmobile trail can be constructed with room to pile snow cleared from the road and snowmobile trail

Some straightening of the road to reduce sharp curves and improve sight lines

Upgrades to ramps and
approaches to the creeks
and rivers

Increased scarification of
the road surface

Improved signage

The Services Company is expecting that the permitting applications will be submitted in mid-October so that construction of the upgrades can begin in mid-November. The construction of the road itself will begin in mid-December, weather permitting.

Road Safety - Everyone's Responsibility

Safe use of the road by all users is the primary concern of the Services Company and we will work to ensure that the road is constructed in manner that will make the road safe and enjoyable to use. The road users must also be aware that responsible driving and reasonable speeds contribute the most towards making the road a safe place to be; and that the recommended speed on the winter road is 50km/ hour.

As usage of the road by community members and commercial traffic continues to increase, all users of the road will need to be extra careful and make sure they keep their speed at or below 50 km/hour and share the road.

Visit www.jamesbaywinterroad.com
For more tips and information on the road.

CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHS –100

Announcing the birth of Isabella Kitty Blacksmith, 9 lbs. 12 3/4 oz. 21". Big Brother: Lazarus Jacob, Proud Parents: Matthew & Amanda Blacksmith, Maternal Grandparents: Nick & Aline Pepe of New York, Paternal Grandparents: Alex & Demearise Blacksmith of Mistissini.

We would like to welcome our new addition to our family Baby Kateleen'sh born on October 1st 2006 @ 9:46pm Weighing In @ 8lbs 11ozs We will be here for you to protect you, to care for you to Love you and to watch you grow everyday of the year and always loving you lots Baby Gurl From Mommy and Daddy and from Big Brother Marcus and Big Sisters Marisa And Mya(wask)

BIRTHDAYS - 101

Our brother Desmond Rhea Moar will be turning 7 years old on October 27th, we want to wish him a Happy Birthday. We love you l'il man have fun and make sure you go to your hockey practices...we love watching ya play. From you sista's: Andrea, Martina & Jennica Moar

Wishing a Happy Birthday to my aunty Miranda Salt on October 17th, 2006. Duda, I'm so lucky to have an aunt like you. I love you so much! I'll pray for you to have a safe delivery of your baby. Take Care...miss you so much! Love always: your niece Amelia Joy Erless (Ottawa)

My baby sister Miranda Arlene Salt will be celebrating her birthday on October 17th, 2006.I would to send her birthday wishes to her & may the good lord watch over her during her expected delivery period in Val D'or. I Luv you & miss so so much Duda!! Hope you have your baby right on your birthday. Take Care xoxoxo Love: Sis Mary Jane (Ottawa)

I would like to wish my Godmother Helen Salt who is studying in Val d'Or a Happy belated Birthday on October 10. I hope you had a nice day. Love from your god daughter Karissa Capissisit in Oujebougoumou. Happy Belated Birthday to my cousin Carina Weapenicappo on October 3, and also to my uncle Peter M Wesley on October 9, from Moose Factory. Love from your cousin/niece Karissa Capissisit Happy Birthday to my Aunt Maryann Capissisit on October 20, 2006. I like it when you visit and babysit me. Love from your niece Karissa xoxo

Desmond Moar will be turning 7 years old on October 27th. We want to wish you a Happy Birthday our "son"shine .We know you'll have alot of gifts to open at your birthday party...may your day be as special as you are. With lots of love & kisses from mom & dad (Wask)

Happy birthday to my big brother Desmond Moar who will be celebrating his 7th birthday on October 27th. From your bro, Kenny ,Waskaganish.

Samson Wischee celebrated his 29th birthday on October 10th, I wanna wish you a Happy belated birthday bro. So you had a Vancouver Canucks cake.....boo! Should've been Montreal Canadiens instead. Anyway a Happy belated birthday to ya, From your sis, Shirley Waskaganish

Happy Belated Birthday to grandpa Andrew on october 6. With love..Leila, Dawn & Simeon in Chisasibi.

I would like to wish my(Nistha - guy) Yvonne Mamianskum happy 2nd birthday on October 20 , 2006 I love you Nistha -guy hope you have fun on your special day love you so much .. from your Jiistow Patricia Snowboy (Whap)

Wishing our grandma a very Happy Birthday on October 2. 2006. Happy Birthday granny!! Our Granny's name is Louisa B WEistche. Thanks granny for letting us open your fridge any time we want.Thank you for being there for us when we need you. Happy Birthday and many more birthdays to come! from;Justin,Justine and Justina

I want to wish my mommy a belated Happy Birthday Louisa B Weistche on October 2, 2006 Happy Birthday Mommy! I'm so lucky to have a mother like you. I thank you for always being there for me and my family.I don't know what I could do without you. I love you and always will.I don't have the words to explain how much you mean to me. I'm sorry for the times I disrepected you. and again Happy Bithday and I love you!! Love ; Norma

Happy 1st Birthday to Crystal Heaven Gilpin on October 9th. With Great Love from, mommy and daddy.

I would like to wish my father, Johnny Bosum in Ouje-Bougoumou a happy birthday on October 19th. Dad may this day be special for you as you are a special father to me. I haven't really spend some time with you and mom for the past two (2) years, but I think it's time for me to come home for awhile and spend some time with you's. I love you, from your son Joshua Bosum.

The date is October 16, 2006. I would like to say Happy 10th birhday to my nephew Austin Snowboy, boy 10 already your sure growinig up so fast, also I would like to my sister and brother- in-law Annie & Ralph Chakapash a Happy 9th annerversary same day, again I would like to say Happy Birthday and Happy Anniversary and many more to come love u much, god bless u fr. aunt, sis & sis-in-law Joanne (Hull)

The date is October 29, 2006 I would like to say a Happy Birthday to 2 special people in my life the first is my nephew Sean Fireman (sunshine) the second one is my second cousin Kate housemoses (Red). they share they're day, again happy birthday and many more to come love you much and miss you lots fr. auntie & second cousin Joanne in Hull

This one goes out to our Beautiful daughter Shaylynn Neeposh Wow! It's been seven years now, the day God sweetly gave us you. We received a precious gift indeed. Yet years seem to pass so rapidly, for it seems as if only yesterday your tiny frame, was in our arms. Yet you see how you've grown today. Wishing you a Happy 7th birthday on November 14, 2006. lot's of love , hugs & kisses from Mom & Dad.

Our Big sister Shaylynn Grace will be celebrating her 7th Birthday on Nov. 14/06 HOORAY!! Another birthday party for us. We're gonna have lots of fun on your special day OK Sis. Love fr. Your lil' sisters Shania Destany & Marissa Trinity P.S. Can you add us on your sleepover party list.

PERSONAL - 300

Hey Are you interested in living down south, and getting paid for it!..here's your chance! I am looking for a Sitter in Hull, while I attending School. If you are interested,or have any questions, you can contact me by email a t : Kimberly.gull@hotmail.com or Cellphone 613-859-7963.

Babysitter in Mistissini or in Nemaska needed!! As soon as possible. Hello I am a young Mother. I'm 24 years old. I work at the Eastmain Camp-1, since June 26, 2006. And I am looking for a babysitter for my only son. My Boyfriend is at home taking care of him. He is a good Father, and he's willing to go back to work. His time at work will be approx.15 days, And his Holiday will fall only for 6 days. We're looking for a nice family to rely on. A family that doesn't envolved Drinking or intend doing Drugs. A family that is relaible & trust worthy. We don't ask much, but at least my son will be well taken care of. I will be at work for 35 days. And my Holiday will fall approxemately for 12 to 14 days. Because we Love our son and it's a sacrafice we have to survive our lil family. The sooner you can contact us, the sooner we'll make the Schedule and the Arrangements. For more Information & Questions. Please contact us at: s_blacksmith@hotmail.com P.S. Leave us your name & number, we'll get back to you as soon as possible. Thank You

Public Service Announcements – 400

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal now has a 1-800 number. You can now reach us toll-free at: 1-866-403-4688. Please check out the new website at: www.nwsm.info and feel free to give us any feedback.

Do you need help? Someone to talk to? Call the Kid's Help Phone's toll-free number, at: 1-800-668-6868 or check out their website at: www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca.

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Aboriginal Women: The Journey Forward

Our lives are ever changing and evolving. Our Nation has gone through many transitions. Too often the contributions and accomplishments of women in Eeyou Istchee are overlooked. Women see this more readily than men as they often feel marginalized.

Eeyou Istchee is filled with women who are the backbone of our nation. These women have important roles and contributions that are helping to restore balance in our lives, our communities and as part of a vision for our Nation as a whole.

We do not need a special month solely to honour women. Each day, we should be appreciating their gifts and what they have to offer. However, in this month let us give particular recognition to women, for their past contributions and for the emerging and dynamic role of leadership that they are taking and showing as we journey forward. This month allows us to acknowledge what is often unspoken and is our way of showing our appreciation to women for being women.

She is a grandmother
She is a mother
She is a sister
She is a daughter
She is strength and that is to be admired and desired.

She is a caregiver. She is a nurturer. She is a woman.

Take the time to honour the women in your life...

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Grand Council of the Crees
(Eeyou Istchee)
Grand conseil des Cris
(Eeyou Istchee)

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Cree Regional Authority
Administration régionale Crie

G.C.C.E.I.

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